The TATLER.

By *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

From *Tueſday September* 26. to *Thurſday September* 28. 1710

From my own Apartment, September 27.

THE following Letter has laid before me many great and manifeſt Evils in the World of Letters which I had overlooked; but they open to me a very buſie Scene, and it will require no ſmall Care and Application to amend Errors which are become ſo univerſal. The Affectation of Politeneſs is expoſed in this Epiſtle with a great deal of Wit and Diſcernment; ſo that whatever Diſcourſes I may fall into hereafter upon the Subjects the Writer treats of, I ſhall at preſent lay the Matter before the World without the leaſt Alteration from the Words of my Correſpondent.

To Iſaac Bickerſtaff *Eſq;*

SIR,

THere are ſome Abuſes among us of great Conſequence, the Reformation of which is properly your Province, tho', as far as I have been converſant in your Papers, you have not yet conſidered them. Theſe are, the deplorable Ignorance that for ſome Years hath reigned among our *Engliſh* Writers, the great Depravity of our Taſt, and the continual Corruption of our Style. I ſay nothing here of thoſe who handle particular Sciences, Divinity, Law, Phyſick, and the like; I mean, the Traders in Hiſtory and Politicks, and the *Belles Lettres*; together with thoſe by whom Books are not tranſlated, but (as the common Expreſſions are) *Done out of French, Latin*, or other Language, and *Made Engliſh*. I cannot but obſerve to you, That till of late Years a *Grub-ſtreet* Book was always bound in Sheep-skin, with ſuitable Print and Paper, the Price never above a Shilling, and taken off wholly by common Tradeſmen, or Country Pedlars. But now they appear in all Sizes and Shapes, and in all Places. They are handed about from Lap-fulls in every Coffee-houſe to Perſons of Quality, are ſhewn in *Weſtminſter-Hall* and the Court of Requeſts. You may ſee them gilt, and in Royal Paper, of Five or Six hundred Pages, and rated accordingly. I would engage to furniſh you with a Catalogue of *Engliſh* Books publiſhed within the Compaſs of Seven Years paſt, which at the firſt Hand would coſt you a Hundred Pounds, wherein you ſhall not be able to find Ten Lines together of common Grammar or common Senſe.

Theſe Two Evils, Ignorance and Want of Taſt, have produced a Third; I mean, the continual Corruption of our *Engliſh* Tongue, which, without ſome timely Remedy, will ſuffer more by the falſe Refinements of Twenty Years paſt, than it hath been improved in the foregoing Hundred: And this is what I deſign chiefly to enlarge upon, leaving the former Evils to your Animadverſion.

But inſtead of giving you a Liſt of the late Refinements crept into our Language, I here ſend you the Copy of a Letter I received ſome Time ago from a moſt accompliſhed Perſon in this Way of Writing, upon which I ſhall make ſome Remarks. It is in theſe Terms.

SIR,

'I *Cou'd n't* get the Things you ſent for all *about Town*---- I *thôt* to *ha'* come down my ſelf, 'and then *I'd ha' brôut 'um*; but I *han't don't*, and 'I believe I *can't do't*, that's *Pozz*---- *Tom* begins to *gi'mſelf Airs* becauſe *he's* going with the 'Plenipo's---- Tis ſaid, the *French* King will 'bamboozl' *us agen*, which *cauſes many Speculations*. 'The *Jacks*, and others of that *Kidney*, are very 'uppiſh, and *alert upon't*, as you may ſee by their 'Phizz's---- *Will Hazzard* has got the *Hipps*, 'having loſt *to the Tune of* Five hundr'd Pound, 'thô he underſtands Play very well, *no body better*. 'He has promis't me upon *Rep*, to leave off Play; 'but you know 'tis a Weakneſs *he's* tôo apt to *give into*, thô he has as much Wit as any Man, *no body more*. He has lain *incog* ever ſince---- The 'Mobb's very quiet with us now---- I believe 'you *th't* I *banter'd* you in my Laſt like a *Country Put*---- I *ſha' n't* leave Town this Month, *&c.*

This Letter is in every Point an admirable Pattern of the preſent polite Way of Writing; nor is it of leſs Authority for being an Epiſtle. You may gather every Flower in it, with a Thouſand more of equal Sweetneſs, from the Books, Pamphlets, and ſingle Papers, offered us every Day in the Coffee-houſes: And theſe are the Beauties introduced to ſupply the Want of Wit, Senſe, Humour, and Learning, which formerly were looked upon as Qualifications for a Writer. If a Man of Wit, who died Forty Years ago, were to riſe from the Grave on Purpoſe, How would he be able to read this Letter? And after he had got through that Difficulty, How would he be able to underſtand it? The firſt Thing that ſtrikes your Eye is the *Breaks* at the End of almoſt every Sentence; of which I know no the Uſe, only that it is a Refinement, and very frequently practiſed. Then you will obſerve the Abbreviations and Eliſions, by which Conſonants of moſt obdurate Sound are joined together, with ut one ſoftening Vowel to intervene; and all this only to make one Syllable of two, directly contrary to the Example of the *Greeks* and *Romans*; altogether of the *Gothick* Strain, and a natural Tendency towards relapſing into Barbarity, which delights in Monoſyllables, and uniting of Mute Conſonants; as it is obſervable in all the *Northern* Languages. And this is ſtill more viſible in the next Refinement, which conſiſts in pronouncing the firſt Syllable in a Word that has many, and diſmiſſing the reſt; ſuch as *Phizz, Hipps, Mobb, Poz. Rep.* and many more; when we are already overloaded with Monoſyllables, which are the Diſgrace of our Language. Thus we cram one Syllable, and cut off the reſt; as the Owl fatten'd her Mice, after ſhe had bit of their Legs to prevent their running away; and if ours be the ſame Reaſon for maiming our Words, it will certainly anſwer the End; for I am ſure no other Nation will deſire to borrow them. Some Words are hitherto but fairly ſplit, and therefore only in their Way to Perfection, as *Incog* and *Plenipo*: But in a ſhort Time 'tis to be hoped they will be further dock'd to *Inc* and *Plen*. This Reflexion has made me of late Years very impatient for a Peace, which I believe would ſave the Lives of many brave Words, as well as Men. The War has introduced Abundance of Polliſyllables, which will never be able to live many more Campagnes; *Speculations, Operations, Preliminaries, Ambaſſadors, Palliſadoes, Communication, Circumvallation, Battalions*, as numerous as they are, if they attack us too frequently

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in our Coffee-houſes, we ſhall certainly put them to Flight, and cut off the Rear.

The Third Refinement obſervable in the Letter I ſend you, conſiſts in the Choice of certain Words invented by ſome *Pretty Fellows*; ſuch as *Banter*, *Bamboozle*, *Country Put*, and *Kidney*, as it is there applied; ſome of which are now ſtrugling for the Vogue, and others are in Poſſeſſion of it. I have done my utmoſt for ſome Years paſt to ſtop the Progreſs of *Mobb* and *Banter*, but have been plainly born down by Numbers, and betrayed by thoſe who promiſed to aſſiſt me.

In the laſt Place, you are to take Notice of certain choice Phraſes ſcattered through the Letter; ſome of them tolerable enough, till they were worn to Rags by ſervile Imitators. You might eaſily find them, though they were not in a different Print, and therefore I need not diſturb them.

Theſe are the falſe Refinements in our Style which you ought to correct: Firſt, by Argument and fair Means; but if thoſe fail, I think you are to make Uſe of your Authority as Cenſor, and by an Annual *Index Expurgatorius* expunge all Words and Phraſes that are offenſive to good Senſe, and condemn thoſe barbarous Mutilations of Vowels and Syllables. In this laſt Point the uſual Pretence is, that they ſpell as they ſpeak; A noble Standard for Language! to depend upon the Caprice of every Coxcomb, who, becauſe Words are the Cloathing of our Thoughts, cuts them out, and ſhapes them as he pleaſes, and changes them oftner than his Dreſs. I believe, all reaſonable People would be content that ſuch Refiners were more ſparing in their Words, and liberal in their Syllables: And upon this Head I ſhould be glad you would beſtow ſome Advice upon ſeveral young Readers in our Churches, who coming up from the Univerſity, full fraught with Admiration of our Town Politeneſs, will needs correct the Style of their Prayer Books. In reading the Abſolution, they are very careful to ſay *pardons* and *abſolves*; and in the Prayer for the Royal Family, it muſt be, *endue 'um*, *enrich 'um*, *proſper 'um*, and *bring 'um*. Then in their Sermons they uſe all the modern Terms of Art, *Sham*, *Banter*, *Mob*, *Bubble*, *Bully*, *Cutting*, *Shuffling*, and *Palming*, all which, and many more of the like Stamp, as I have heard them often in the Pulpit from ſuch young Sophiſters, ſo I have read them in ſome of *thoſe Sermons that have made moſt Noiſe of late*. The Deſign, it ſeems, is to avoid the dreadful Imputation of Pedantry, to ſhew us, that they know the Town, underſtand Men and Manners, and have not been poring upon old unfaſhionable Books in the Univerſity.

I ſhould be glad to ſee you the Inſtrument of introducing into our Style that Simplicity which is the beſt and trueſt Ornament of moſt Things in Life, which the politer Ages always aimed at in their Building and Dreſs, *(Simplex munditiis)* as well as their Productions of Wit. 'Tis manifeſt, that all new, affected Modes of Speech, whether borrowed from the Court, the Town, or the Theatre, are the firſt periſhing Parts in any Language, and, as I could prove by many Hundred Inſtances, have been ſo in ours. The Writings of *Hooker*, who was a Country Clergyman, and of *Parſons* the Jeſuit, both in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, are in a Style that, with very few Allowances, would not offend any preſent Reader; much more clear and intelligible than thoſe of Sir *H. Wotton*, Sir *Robert Naunton*, *Osborn*, *Daniel* the Hiſtorian, and ſeveral others who writ later; but being Men of the Court, and affecting the Phraſes than in Faſhion, they are often either not to be underſtood, or appear perfectly ridiculous.

What Remedies are to be applied to theſe Evils I have not Room to conſider, having, I fear, already taken up moſt of your Paper. Beſides, I think it is our Office only to repreſent Abuſes, and yours to redreſs them. I am, with great Reſpect,

SIR,

Your, &c.

Advertiſements.

☞ The THIRD Volume of the LUCUBRATIONS of Iſaac Bickerſtaff Eſq; on a large Letter, in Octavo, being now in the Preſs; ſuch as pleaſe to ſubſcribe for it on a Royal Paper, to keep up their Sets, are deſired to ſend their Names to Charles Lilly, Perfumer, the Corner of Beauford-Buildings in the Strand, and John Morphew near Stationers-Hall.

MOrning-Gowns for Men and Women, of Silk, Stuffs, and Callicoe's (being the Goods of Perſons that failed) which were to be diſpoſed of at the Olive-Tree and Still, are now to be ſold at the Golden Sugar-Loaf up one Pair of Stairs, over-againſt the Horſe at Charing-Croſs; with a freſh Parcel at very low Rates, the Price being ſet on each Gown.

Drinking-Glaſſes, Decanters, Cruits, &c.

THere having of late been many Advertiſements publiſhed, of Flint-Glaſs ſold at ſome particular Places at 12 d. per Pound; This is to give Notice, That 12 d. per Pound is the Current Price the Shopkeepers of London and Weſtminſter do ſell at. And all Gentlemen and others may, at any of the ſaid Shops, have any Sort of Flint-Glaſſes, (and Glaſſes made to Pattern) at 12 d. per Pound.

*** **This Day is publiſhed, Theſaurus Theologicus; or, A Compleat Syſtem of Divinity; ſumm'd up in brief Notes upon ſelect Places of the Old and New Teſtament: Wherein the Sacred Text is reduced under proper Heads, explained, and illuſtrated with the Opinions and Authorities of the Ancient Fathers, Councils, &c. By W. Beveridge, D. D. late Lord Biſhop of St. Aſaph, in 2 Vol. Price bound 10 s. Printed for R. Smith in Exeter-Exchange in the Strand; where may be had the ſaid Biſhop's Engliſh Works in 14 Vol. Price 3 l. 7 s. 6 d.**

†† **Juſt publiſhed, for the Uſe of Schools, Select Stories out of Ovid's Metamorphoſis. The 2d Edition, with the Addition of Ajax and Ulyſſes out of the 13th Book. Corderius, the 2d Edition, with Engliſh Notes likewiſe. By the Author of the Peculiars. Sold by T. Guy at the Oxford-Arms in Lombard-ſtreet, and J. Churchill at the Black Swan in Pater-Noſter-row. Where Phædrus, Terence, Caſtalio, and the reſt of the Books by the ſame Author, are to be had.**

NOtice is hereby given by the Agent for the Captors, That there will be expoſed to Sale on Tueſday the 3d of October next, at Lloyd's Coffee-houſe in Lombard-ſtreet, at four in the Afternoon (only one Cask in a Lot) viz. 57 Hhds. and 4 Teaſes of new Prize French Pontac Clarets, bright, ſtrong and freſh, of the right Flavour, and the beſt that has been brought into England for many Years paſt, deſigned for the French Generals in Flanders, but was taken by an Engliſh Man of War; now in a Vault under the late Dwelling-houſe of Mr. Fym, the Corner of Water-lane in Tower-ſtreet. To be taſted on Saturday the 30th Inſtant, and Monday the 2d of October, from 7 to 1, and from 2 till 6, and all Tueſday till the Hour of Sale. Catalogues ſhall be timely diſperſed, by T. Tomkins, Broker.

FOR Sale by the Candle, on Thurſday the 5th of October next, at Garraway's Coffee-houſe in Exchange-Alley, at Four in the Afternoon (only one Cask in a Lot) viz. 55 Hhds. and 8 half Hhds. of excellent French (Margaux and Obrion) Clarets, deep, bright, ſtrong, and of the true Flavour, neat and entire, perfect fine, and fit for Bottling; lying in a Vault under Clothworkers-Hall in Mincing-lane. To be ſeen and taſted on Tueſday and Wedneſday next from 7 to 1, and from 2 to 6, and all Thurſday till the Hour of Sale. To be ſold by Thomas Tomkins, Broker, in Seething lane, between Tower-ſtreet and Crouched-Friars.

A Small Parcel of Pictures belonging to a Perſon of Quality lately deceaſed, will be ſold by Auction at the late Dutcheſs of Devonſhire's Houſe in the Haymarket near Piccadilly, to Morrow being the 29th of this Inſtant September. The Sale will begin at 10 in the Forenoon. The Pictures to be ſeen this Day, and Catalogues had at the Place of Sale.

BOhee Tea, made of the beſt Green Tea, tinctured with the ſame Materials Foreign Bohee is tinctured with, in Goodneſs little inferior to the beſt Foreign Bohee Tea. Sold at 16 s. a Pound, by R. Fary only, at the Bell in Gracechurch ſtreet, Druggiſt. Chocolate made of the beſt Nuts, ground very fine, 2 s. 6 d. a Pound; Chocolate with Sugar, 1 s. 8 d. a Pound. To a Quantity further Encouragement.

THIS is to give Notice, That Mr. Peters's Sale of Houſes in Glocester-ſtreet, of 1000 l. for Half a Crown, being near full, will be drawn within a Fortnight at fartheſt. Tickets are to be had at Mr. Marrett's in Devonſhire-ſtreet, without Biſhopſgate; Mr. Meaſures, Milliner, near Serjeant's-Inn, Fleet-ſtreet; Mr. Hill's, Goldſmith, in Bedford-Buildings, Covent-Garden; Mr. Andrews's, Glover, in Charles-Court in the Strand; at Child's Coffee-houſe in St. Paul's Church-yard; Mr. Lillie's at the Corner of Beauford-Buildings in the Strand; Mr. Blandies, Grocer, in Devonſhire ſtreet, Red-Lion-fields; Mr. Seal's, Ironmonger, in Stanhope-ſtreet, Clare-market; and at the other Places mentioned in the Propoſals.

THE Twelvepenny Sale of Plate and other valuable Goods at Mrs. Stoke's in Crown Court in Ruſſel-ſtreet, Covent-Garden, will be drawn on Thurſday the 5th of October. There being ſome few Tickets to be diſpoſed of, they may be had at the Place aforeſaid.

PErpetual Office at London-ſtone for raiſing Money upon Marriage. Real Security is given, and now Experience ſhews, that any ſingle Perſons in City or Country, for 6 d. Entrance, and 2 s. per Quarter, may gain from 40 l. to 400 l. as per Propoſals, and the Money always punctually paid without Delay. In the like Manner by the ſame Author, 6 d. Entrance, and 2 s. per Quarter, for Apprentices to ſet up. Alſo for the double Benefit of little Children, from their Birth to Seven, and from Seven to Fourteen Years of Age, as by Propoſals given gratis at the ſaid Office. In all which a good Progreſs is already made.

Sold by *John Morphew* near *Stationers-Hall*; where Advertiſements are taken in.